

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT BOARD
Meeting Report

Date/Place—January 23, 2003/Department of Administration, Providence

Members/Representatives Present—Howard Boksenbaum, OLIS—RIDOA (Acting Chair); Michael Hogan, RI House Policy; Janet Levesque, RILOCAT; Dexter Merry, Public Telecommunications Authority; Joseph Pomposelli, DLT; Bruce Reirden, Care New England; A.T. Wall, DOC; James Willis, Secretary of State's Office

Members/Representatives Absent—Hon. Stephen Alves, RI Senate; William Ferland, OHE; Rosemary Booth Gallogly, Budget Office—RIDOA; Nicholas Leporacci, MHRH; Raymond McKay, City of Warwick; Peter McWalters, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; James R. Monti, Jr., West Warwick School District; Joan Ress Reeves, Library Board of RI; Christopher Wessells, URI; Don Wolfe, Member-at-Large

Other Attendees—James Berard, DOC; Carol Ciotola (recording secretary), OLIS—RIDOA; Joan Gammon, RI.gov; Beth Perry, OLIS—RIDOA; Gwenn Stearn, Secretary of State's Office/Archives; Townsend Goddard, RI Senate Policy Office

Chair's Report—Mr. Boksenbaum introduced Robert J. Higgins, the newly appointed Director of Administration, invited by the Chair to address the Board. He also introduced James Willis, who will serve as Secretary of State Brown's representative.

Mr. Higgins spoke about his experience thus far with state government. In attempting to determine how much the State spends on technology, he learned that this is a decentralized function in State government; thus, no one knows what Information Technology's aggregate budget is. In fact, he learned that most of the critical resource elements are decentralized. While the State has executive staff, it has no strategy with respect to functions, such as information technology, human resources or legal services. He stated that this Administration is taking a fresh look at the structure of State government in terms of all of the line departments, many of which have overlapping responsibilities for its customers. It is also looking at the common functional needs that exist across State government, which are properly supported. He stated that the lack of a Chief Information Officer is a travesty in terms of how the State should be run and felt that the State has not embraced technology as an effective and efficient tool. The efforts and functions of this Board as they relate to information technology will be embraced as a core strategy and will be the thrust of the new Administration. He identified information technology as an area that this Administration will focus on when investing its precious resources, and it will be an area that will receive priority treatment. He learned that contract programmers are utilized by the State, but the number could not be determined. If handled correctly, he explained, department lines would have a substantial amount of input, but execution would be more efficiently done on a centralized basis; and this Administration plans to take that approach.

- Messrs. Merry and Reirden applauded the Director's comments. Mr. Reirden asked Mr. Higgins if he had seen a copy of the Board's latest Annual Progress Report, which had been provided to the Transition Team. Learning that he had not, Mr. Boksenbaum will provide a second copy.

Mr. Higgins was amazed to learn that there is no disaster recovery plan for the State. He asked how the State was able to accommodate Y2K and the Auditor General or any oversight board without a disaster recovery plan. He believes that the public is unaware of this fact.

- Mr. Berard noted that certain departments, such as the Department of Corrections (DOC), maintain disaster recovery plans, but the State as a whole does not.
- Mr. Reirden asked the Director if he expected the IRMB to become a more active part of State government, more so than in the past. Mr. Higgins replied that the Governor created a task force to study information technology of which Howard Edels is the Chair. The Information Technology Task Force consists mainly of large employers of the State, such as CVS and Textron. The plan is to conduct a needs assessment that will provide a baseline of what is being spent in technology. He noted that it might be surprising to learn how much is actually being spent. What the needs

assessment would determine is where the funds are being channeled and whether the funds are being spent efficiently. As a result, department heads would have an inventory and financial resources devoted to information technology to create a strategy for the State to move forward. This work, in conjunction with the work of a quantitative chief analyst to pull numbers together, will help to shape a job description for the Chief Information Officer, so that this Administration can go out in a search to plug that position in.

- Mr. Reirden noted that the Annual Progress Report identified five major issues. He explained that as a Chief Information Officer in the private sector and a Board member for many years, he felt he could provide an outside perspective in drafting a job description. He thought it great that this Administration would be taking a very serious look at technology. He felt that if priorities were set for the State with respect to information technology, the return on investment could be enormous; and many things could be accomplished if resources could be pulled together correctly.

- Mr. Boksenbaum felt the compilation of an interface framework to be an important element as well.

Mr. Higgins explained that in the private sector he was used to having risk-return analyses done to eliminate costs or raise revenue. In State government, however, that dynamic is not available. Thus, the State must work its way through these issues, without appearing to attack, to try to include this dynamic into the equation. In the public sector, there are many barriers that prevent the State from taking the right actions; thus, it must identify the front end and think of ways to bring the barriers down.

- Mr. Boksenbaum noted that using the Chief Information Officer's job description as a guide, the Board could now finalize a recommendation for presentation to the Director.
- Mr. Higgins asked if Mr. Edels or Mr. Treat had addressed this Board. Mr. Boksenbaum replied that both gentlemen had been invited to attend a Board meeting; as yet, they have not responded; he will extend a second invitation.
- Mr. Higgins asked about the history of this Board. Mr. Boksenbaum stated that it was established by law in 1995 to provide a framework for the planning and architecture of the State. Mr. Higgins assumed that this Board was given this mission with no authority and no staff. Mr. Boksenbaum concurred, but noted that the Board has worked hard to keep issues in front of those with the responsibility to enact policies. Some were heeded, while others were ignored. The Board's primary activity at this time is to govern the State's partner—New England Interactive—the company that is building the State Web Portal, stressing that a substantial amount of effort has gone into this project.
- Mr. Higgins asked if this Board reviewed data warehouse technology across State government, noting that data warehousing solely for the Division of Taxation is too narrow a field in which to invest a significant amount of resources. Mr. Boksenbaum replied that, indeed, others might be more suitable. He noted that this Board has encountered data warehousing; however, development could not occur due to budget constraints.
- Mr. Berard noted that DOC is moving towards data warehousing, driven mostly by Homeland Security defense funds. He explained that DOC is reviewing it because State government is good at collecting data but terrible at analyzing that data for decision-making. Mr. Higgins agreed that stored data should be used as a tool for analysis. Mr. Berard said that databases could be combined for this type of use by the State's financial resources staff. Mr. Boksenbaum noted how important that kind of data mining would be over the next few years. As a member of the Governor's Education Task Force's Committee on Integration of State Services/Agencies, he noted that a similar issue was discussed at its meeting earlier in the day—the integration of services for children. Each agency and each entity that agencies employ keep their own data on children. To establish a more efficient approach, a single identifier for each child is being developed. Within the IRMB, however, there is no mechanism with which to undertake this type of effort.
- Mr. Reirden explained that with respect to the Johnston Computer Center, there are basic issues that need to be addressed—a disaster recovery plan is one of them, and renovation of the Johnston Information Technology Operations Center (ITOC) would be another. Mr. Berard said that in revising DOC's disaster recovery plan, the ITOC would have been used as DOC's fallback system in the event of a disaster if it could have handled that effort. Unfortunately, it is not equipped to do so.

[Mr. Higgins left the meeting.]

Mr. Reirden distributed and reviewed an Internet article entitled “ROI is a Matter of Setting Priorities,” from the *Darwin Magazine*.

- Mr. Boksenbaum noted that one element that has to drive any kind of discussion about return on investment, especially for State government, is the business function that technology has to serve. Information technology works when supporting a business process, and it is at the business-process level where prioritization has to occur. With respect to the State, there are a number of agencies that know what their businesses are and can articulate planning for several accounts; however, the State as a whole cannot perform this function. A while ago, there was an e-Government initiative by OLIS, whereby, agencies were encouraged to present technology proposals; however, there was no mechanism in place to organize it. If the Governor were to need recommendations as to which technology proposals to eliminate, for example, responding would prove difficult.
- Mr. Boksenbaum also noted that when the Governor talks about integrating social services and public safety services, this would be the starting point for the State to set priorities statewide. This could be the time to align information technology and business functions; nevertheless, there would need to be a threshold level of preparedness prior to using technology, for which ITOC could be the beginning. He reiterated that the Director had endorsed this Board as the State’s information technology planning body.
- Mr. Reirden noted that as this Board goes forward, it will be important for members to work with Mr. Edels.
- Mr. Boksenbaum noted that he sent the Transition Team contact information about the Board. He suggested that Messrs. Pomposelli and Willis contact Mr. Edels as well.

Approval of November 21, 2002, Meeting Report—By Board consensus, the November 21, 2002, Meeting Report, as presented, was accepted.

Portal Review Committee Report (distributed)—Ms. Gammon distributed T-shirts created for Board members by RI.gov’s creative services director as a way to say thank you. The T-shirts read: “I helped build the RI state government portal...and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.”

Ms. Gammon reported that right after the January 21 Committee meeting, at Representative Kilmartin’s request, she testified on a bill that would authorize the DMV to allow new car dealers to register motor vehicles directly at their place of business. She noted that the bill was tabled because a union representative opposed it. She did not remember the name of the gentleman that testified, but was asked to contact George Nee to discuss this matter.

- Mr. Boksenbaum said that he would give a “heads up” to the Department of Administration’s Labor Relations Office. He then asked Ms. Gammon about the objection. Ms. Gammon replied that the union representative opposed the bill because the union had not been contacted prior to its introduction.

Ms. Gammon reported that she met with Mr. Treat of the Governor’s Transition Team and was asked to make a presentation to the Information Technology Task Force, which she will coordinate. Additionally, RI.gov will develop a web site for the Governor and will redesign the Lt. Governor’s web site. She then reviewed the report, inviting feedback on its new format. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that since much of Ms. Gammon’s presentation is covered within her written report, in the interest of efficiency for future meetings, this report will be distributed to members without an oral review.

Ms. Gammon reported on a series of marketing events being planned, including e-mails to new people in State government to introduce RI.gov. She presented services launched and has been in discussion with DEM about next projects, which might include purchasing Rhode Island hunting and fishing licenses online. She explained that the more citizen services that are placed online via the portal, the more recognition RI.gov would receive. With respect to online vehicle registration renewals, she stated that this application is ready for beta testing. Due to the lack of DMV staff to accomplish beta testing, Ms. Gammon suggested to the DMV Administrator that RI.gov take a laptop with a dial-in connection to one of DMV’s locations to conduct testing and asked his approval to undertake this activity. The

Administrator granted his approval for her to proceed, and beta testing will take place on January 29; once completed, this service will go “live.”

- Mr. Reirden asked if unions had been involved with this process. Mr. Boksenbaum replied that about six months ago he and the head of Labor Relations for the Department of Administration met with union leaders and came to an agreement that allowed this service to move forward.

Ms. Gammon noted that financial reports will include month-to-month comparisons, and revenue will include year-to-year comparisons. Further, page views—not hits—will be tracked. Projects have been separated into the following categories: creative services, meetings/in discussion, requirements gathering/prototype development, in development, in testing, and complete/live. One project, in particular, was noted—Online Payment of Uniform Commercial Code Filings using NEI’s ePayment Engine. This project has been completed, but the Secretary of State’s Office has delayed its implementation for 90 days for internal reasons.

- Mr. Willis noted that regarding this particular set of files, the Secretary of State’s developer—EDS—advised the Secretary not to go “live” until the backlog of files was eliminated to insure that searches conducted would present up-to-date data. He stated that the Secretary of State’s Office had nothing but good things to say about the billing portion of this project and entirely endorses it.

Ms. Gammon stressed that RI.gov is in partnership with the State and would welcome any comments/criticisms about the portal setup or the reformatted report. She then presented three handouts of interest: (1) a Search Systems site listing all public record databases by state; (2) a “Cost Benefit Study of Online Services” from the Center for Digital Government’s web site (If the link does not work, Ms. Gammon said that she would e-mail the report to members.); and (3) a *Governing.com*’s web site article entitled “The Pain of Transition.”

Mr. Boksenbaum provided an update on another portal matter. Garry Bliss of the General Treasurer’s Office contacted him with respect to the “Pledge of Accounts” section of the portal contract that requires all network revenue accounts to be pledged to the State to secure the obligations of NEI. Regulations changed before this part of the contract could be fulfilled; and as a result, banks refused to implement this type of arrangement. He and Mr. Bliss plan to meet with a representative of Citizens Bank to attempt to move this last piece of the contractual obligations forward.

Old Business: Chief Information Officer’s Job Description—Mr. Boksenbaum distributed the draft job description that Mr. Reirden had prepared for Board review at its November meeting. He was to have modified it, including input from the membership. To date, no feedback has been received. As this Board heard earlier, it now has someone to present its recommendations to about this position. For members’ information, he distributed Chapter 29-3.1-7 of the Rhode Island General Laws, presenting the duties of the Chief Information Officer (which includes library functions). He said that a paragraph could be added to the draft job description summarizing the contents of the law, or the Board could elect to modify the law. If the second course of action is chosen, then a recommendation must be prepared to address the current duties of the Chief Information Officer; this Board should also be prepared to offer draft legislation in this regard.

- Mr. Wall asked if Mr. Boksenbaum was speaking of Library Services. He replied that he was, explaining that after a number of alterations regarding the Chief Information Officer’s duties, the only mandated duty with respect to Information Technology that resulted was to provide staff to this Board. Mr. Wall said that after reviewing last month’s meeting report, he got the impression that the Board felt that Information Technology and Library Services should be separated. Mr. Reirden explained that he prepared the draft job description after reviewing Chief Information Officer job descriptions from private entities and other states. At that time, he did not have available to him the Chief Information Officer’s duties as presented in law, and, therefore, did not include the unique library functions in his draft.
- Mr. Boksenbaum said that at the time that the law was written, placing Information Technology and Library Services together was the trend in the academic world, and this trend continues today. In Rhode Island, the idea to consider placing Information Technology with Library Services came from the former Department of State Library Services. The Governor at that time removed this state

department from his Cabinet and placed the Office of Library and Information Services within the Department of Administration. With respect to the inclusion of Statewide Planning, Mr. Boksenbaum noted that based on his interactions with Statewide Planning during the past year, sitting informally as the Chief Information Officer, he cannot see how it fits in with Information Technology and Library Services. What is missing from information technology as it moves into information resources management is a series of issues in the nexus of questions that float around content; information technology does not make decision about the content of databases. Mr. Berard argued, however, that in designing a database it is essential to know business costs and structure. Mr. Boksenbaum clarified that those elements do not constitute actual content. Mr. Reirden agreed that content would be the responsibility of the customer.

- Mr. Boksenbaum felt there were benefits to be derived by including the Library Services element with Information Technology. He suggested incorporating a paragraph to include Library Services into the draft Chief Information Officer's job description. He also suggested that further comments from the membership be forwarded to Mr. Reirden, who will revise his draft for members' review at its next meeting, in February.
- Mr. Wall felt that the academic model does not always translate into government functions. In fact, it appears that harnessing these two elements was more a matter of convenience, and he felt that to continue in this manner might actually weaken both components. A substantial amount of leadership is going to be needed with respect to Information Technology, and it sounded to him like the new Administration is eager to promote that leadership. In that regard, it appears that the Library Services aspect of this office would fall by the wayside. Furthermore, he stated that to the degree that OLIS must be headed by a librarian, he felt that the office would lose credibility with hard-core information technology types. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that the Governor and the Director of Administration agree with him. He further noted that the coupling of these two elements could be perceived as a denigration of libraries.
- Mr. Levesque stated that libraries are in the business of information gathering and asked how it could be said that there is no relationship between the two entities, and that information and technology should be separated. Mr. Wall believed that the way structure and process are organized to convey information is different than information content itself. It must be determined whether the function should be housed under the aegis of the Chief Information Officer, noting that the Chief Information Officer would not then be perceived as the head of Library Services. Instead, Library Services would become a section or unit that could be part of another location in State government. It seemed to Mr. Reirden that the Chief Information Officer's job description was created from librarian functions. What he pieced together, he explained, was a job description that would be found in corporate America in terms of product and services. He agreed with Mr. Wall, in that there is content that Library Services manages, and the organization, infrastructure, computer programming process, backup of data and information that sits on top of information technology is that for which Information Technology is responsible. It might not be necessary to pull these services apart, but they must be managed differently. Having data available on top of technology is in his opinion the data warehouse mechanism that the Director had spoken about. This would allow Directors to access the information to make better business decisions.
- Ms. Levesque noted that in the case of libraries, information technology is used to deliver content. Mr. Reirden explained, however, that knowledge and data sit on top of information technology, and information technology allows access to library services. Library Services would use information technology to its benefit, but would now do so in a way so as to allow Information Technology to serve other parts of governmental operations in the same way. Mr. Boksenbaum explained that the Chief Information Officer also serves as Executive Director over three distinct operations—Information Technology, Statewide Planning and Library Services. Under law, however, the Chief Information Officer's duties only refer to libraries, and under the law establishing the IRMB, staffing is to be provided by OLIS. He did not believe there to be any reference to Planning in the law. It was probably included as an organizational feature with respect to the OLIS merge. He noted, however,

how appropriately Library Services could be included as part of Information Technology. Staff performing library programming could say that the content and knowledge management functions of libraries cross state government much in the same way that information technology cuts across state government. Mr. Reirden said he would summarize the Chief Information Officer's duties as presented in the law and incorporate it into his draft.

- Mr. Wall felt it would be appropriate to include in the Chief Information Officer's job description the oversight responsibilities by the Executive Director of Library Services just as he as the Director of Corrections oversees different operations. He emphasized that the Chief Information Officer's position must be viewed as being a technology officer, and then Library Services could be placed somewhere within that agency. In response to inquiries from Mr. Wall, Mr. Boksenbaum named Anne Parent, Assistant Director, State Library Management Services, as the person who oversees the library function in OLIS, and stated that he does, in fact, delegate those duties within Library Services to Ms. Parent, while overseeing the unit. Taking Mr. Boksenbaum's response into account, he noted that the problem is that the job's statutory description does not suggest this to be the case. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that basically staffs at the assistant director level and higher do not have formal job descriptions. Mr. Wall noted that DOC wrote its own job descriptions.
- Ms. Levesque asked if in rewriting the job description, the responsibility for oversight of OLIS would constitute a new position. Mr. Boksenbaum stated that it would not, since the Chief Information Officer also serves as the Executive Director over Statewide Planning, Library Programs and Information Technology. He will provide to members the full content of the law with respect to OLIS. He noted that OLIS is the only agency that he is aware of that is federally mandated to operate a library. Mr. Wall noted that DOC is also required to house a library. Mr. Boksenbaum asked Mr. Reirden to revise the draft Chief Information Officer's job description, incorporating comments from this meeting, as well as any further comments received from the membership. This item will be placed on the February agenda to finalize it in the form of a recommendation for presentation to the Director of Administration. If the response is not receptive to the Board, he will request a meeting with the Director to talk about this matter, as well as Planning's function in this mix. It was his understanding that Planning might be placed within the Economic Development Corporation.

New Business—Mr. Wall was pleased to report that DOC is now represented on both the Domestic Preparedness Subcommittee and its Communications Working Group. Both of these groups were created under the Homeland Security Act. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that he had sporadically been reporting to this Board on the activities of the Communications Working Group, which is part of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Advisory Council. This Group has been asked to review telecommunications throughout the state. He offered to include monthly reports if the Board thought it would be useful. Mr. Wall felt monthly reporting would be useful, since a substantial amount of information technology projects are being funded with respect to homeland security. Mr. Boksenbaum will include monthly reports on the Communications Working Group's activities.

Next Meeting—Thursday, February 20, at 3 p.m. Mr. Boksenbaum suggested a new meeting place and asked if Mr. Merry would make arrangements to hold the next meeting at his office. Mr. Merry agreed to host the next meeting, and Ms. Ciotola will contact him to arrange for the Board to meet at WSBE Channel 36's office at 50 Park Lane in Providence.